

Online Appendix A: Selected border municipalities and VOTO fieldwork

Municipality Federal state	Inhabitants	Border relevance	Municipality council	VOTO fieldwork
<i>Merzig</i> <i>Saarland</i>	31.618	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located in the border triangle LUX, F, D with high level of cross-border mobility to Luxembourg Saarland: Part of SaarLorLux Greater Region which is well connected economically and politically with a significant cross-border labour market, political initiatives and numerous cross-border projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024: CDU (41,4%), SPD (26,2%), AfD (14,3%), Greens (7,6%), Freie Wähler (6,8%), FDP (3,6%), The Left did not stand for election 	Available from May 15, 2024 with answers by 5 parties
<i>Saarbrücken</i> <i>Saarland</i>	179.296	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located on the French border, bordering Sarreguemines and Forbach (F) Strong Franco-German educational presence Saarland: see Merzig 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024: SPD (29.6%), CDU 28%, Greens (13.7%), The Left (7.5%), FDP (7.9%), Die PARTEI (7.3%), bunt.saar (3.4%), AfD excluded due to violences of the election law Slight dominance of left parties 	Available from May 15, 2024 with answers by 6 parties
<i>Konstanz</i> <i>Baden-Württemberg</i>	87.000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located on the Swiss border, bordering Kreuzlingen (CH) Strong cross-border labor mobility (more German citizens commuting in Switzerland than vice versa) ~30% of Kreuzlingen's population is German, but few Swiss in Konstanz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2019: strong dominance of left-leaning parties and lists (61%) over centre-right and conservative ones 2024: left-leaning dominance narrowed slightly (58% vs. 42%) No far-right party contested the elections 	Available from May 12 to June 8, 2024 with 16 general and 14 locally specific issues answered by 8 parties and local lists
<i>Frankfurt (Oder)</i> <i>Brandenburg</i>	57.000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located on the Polish border, bordering twin city Słubice (PL) Joint City marketing and projects but monitored with border controls (since October 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AfD (28,7%), CDU (22.9%), The Left (15,8%), SPD (12,7%), list of Greens and BI (6,1%), Freie Wähler and FBI-BVB (5.2%), Die PARTEI (4.9%), FDP (3.8%) 	Available from May 14, 2024 with 18 general, 14 local and 4 border-specific issues answered by 8 parties
<i>Greifswald</i> <i>Mecklenburg-Vorpommern</i>	56.000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Border proximity exists cross-border issues played no role during VOTO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDU (20,1%), AfD (16,2%), Greens (13,2%), The Left (13,1%) + multiple smaller parties and lists with more left-leaning actors 	Available from May 2024 with 18 general and 22 locally specific issues answered by 16 parties, list and independent candidates

Online Appendix B: Regression analysis (using non-weighted data)

	(1) EU Integration Attitudes	(2) Border controls	(3) EU restricts municip	(4) EU Integration Attitudes	(5) Border controls	(6) EU restricts municip
Border policy factor	0.79** (12.88)	5.76 (5.47)	5.94** (26.55)			
Town twinnings				0.021*** (15.25)	0.079 (2.29)	0.15** (5.79)
Gender (Ref: Man)	0.15 (3.98)	3.17 (3.00)	0.60 (0.67)	0.26* (3.02)	1.69 (1.04)	1.36 (1.87)
Age	-0.0075 (-2.08)	-0.30* (-7.74)	-0.14 (-1.84)	-0.0043 (-0.99)	-0.31** (-5.17)	-0.17 (-1.80)
Education	0.20 (3.25)	4.25** (20.61)	3.27** (24.81)	0.24** (8.32)	4.76*** (15.20)	3.96** (7.55)
Political interest	0.18* (10.39)	0.74 (1.66)	5.49 (6.29)	0.14** (5.32)	1.54 (1.85)	4.20* (3.37)
Left-right	-0.24* (-7.33)	-5.19** (-14.39)	-2.65 (-5.12)	-0.33*** (-15.32)	-6.17*** (-17.07)	-3.22*** (-13.88)
Satisfaction government	0.15 (5.49)	1.92 (5.52)	2.01* (7.18)	0.20** (6.19)	2.37** (7.27)	2.61** (5.17)
_cons	7.16** (24.88)	66.8** (24.26)	39.3** (25.05)	5.78*** (36.91)	62.0*** (28.56)	34.2** (5.50)
<i>N</i>	980	1042	1042	1427	1529	1529
<i>R</i> ²	0.302	0.241	0.221	0.301	0.276	0.237
<i>weights</i>	no	no	no	no	no	no

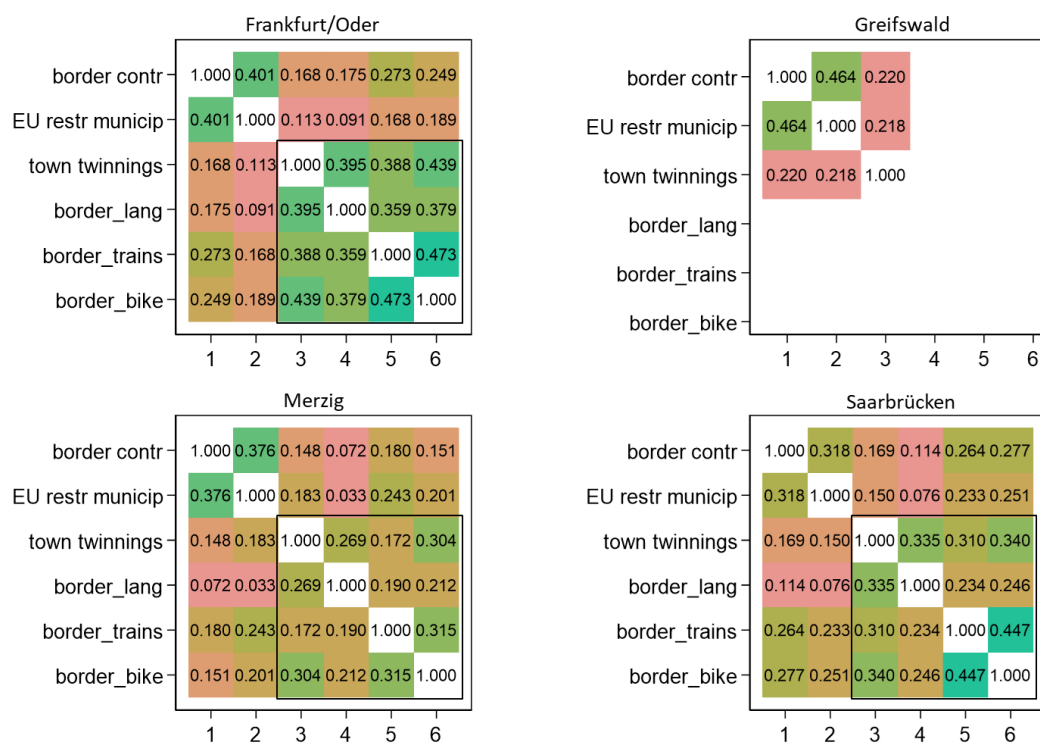
Note: *t* statistics in parentheses, * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$. All regression with clustered standard errors (clusters are the municipalities)

Online Appendix C: Note on weighting

As descriptive analysis shows that certain groups in our VOTO VAA are significantly over- or underrepresented, we calculate a calibration weight based on the demographic characteristics of gender, age and education in order to improve the representativeness of the sample. From a methodological perspective, iterative proportional fitting (IPF) is employed to perform a raking procedure that iteratively adjusts the weights for the three variables to align with the distribution in the target population (Sand & Kunz, 2020). In accordance with the legal voting age for local elections, we define the target population as persons aged sixteen years and older. The target distribution of the variables is derived from the official Zensus 2022 data (Statistisches

Bundesamt, 2025). However, the Zensus data structure results in the following limitations for the calibration weight: Firstly, diverse respondents (e.g., n=16 in Saarbrücken, n=3 in Merzig) cannot be taken into account in the weighting due to limited data availability, as the Zensus entails a binary conception of gender. Secondly, the Zensus reflects age groups (16-18, 19-24, 25-39, 40-59, 60-66, 67-74, 75 and older). Therefore, the weighting of the survey data is adjusted to these age groups, which means that a slight distortion can be assumed. Thirdly, the census provides the education (highest educational attainment) for persons aged 15 and over. This results in distortions, as 15-year-olds cannot be extracted from the data and the target variable to which the weighting adjustment is applied therefore additionally includes persons aged 15 who, by definition, do not belong to the population. The same applies to the gender variable, which also includes 15-year-olds.

Online-Appendix D: Correlation heatmap on the different border- and EU-related items in the VOTO



Note: Correlation heatmap indicates the intercorrelations between the 4 border-related items in the VOTO (town-twinings (3), border language (4), border train tracks (5), and border bike paths (6), as well as between those and the EU-related items (border controls (1) and EU influence on municipal politics (2)). The purely cross-border issues are also highlighted by a box in the low left corner. For item wording, see Fig. 2 in the main text. Please note that we excluded Konstanz here as we only collected data on the two EU items there.